1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12



Adultery probably occurs more frequently than is known, but the offense is generally kept within the family and from police knowledge. Incest may also occur more commonly than is suspected. This is implied in the statement of Old Kean, blaming several cases of physical deformity on the fact that people are too "mixed up." Within the Indian community, drunkenness is scarcely considered as criminal and is regarded as good "fun" so long as it does not lead to violence. Lying is disliked but is not strongly resented. Braggarts, who overindulge in "bullshit," are secretly criticized and ridiculed.

Many property offenses are condoned with the realization that the owner must be careful not to give the impression of selfishness. A few individuals are widely known for their tendency to steal and such people receive careful watching. Indian caches and those of white trappers remain free from violation except in case of hunger, and even then will only be approached by the rare person with a pronounced predilection for stealing. Government supplies along the Alaska Highway were rarely disturbed by Indians, who had abundant opportunity to observe instances of disrespect for such property by their white neighbors. The accusation of trap line infringement is sometimes voiced, especially with regard to beaver trapping. Some white men are almost paranoiac in their suspicion that Indians are poaching on their lines, but most white trappers regard such intense insecurity as an unwarranted quirk of thinking. Several years ago Edward Prince was arrested and fined for hunting beaver on a white man's territory. It is not unusual for a number of youths to plan the stealing of a brew that is ready for drinking. No moral hesitation and little secrecy is apparent in such behavior, as anyone would agree who has seen a tract of bush alive with people hunting for a reported beer keg. The finders try to finish as much of the beverage as possible before they in turn are discovered. Young children often show a predilection for stealing small gaudy trifles, like toys, but are severely punished if discovered by parents. In the case of property offenses by adults, discovery generally leads to recrimination, a demand for the return of the stolen goods, or suppressed hostility. Offenses connected with the nonfulfillment of credit obligations to traders are rare. Such defaults would quickly result in the blocking of further credit and few persons could sustain this penalty. Between individuals, failure to repay loans may lead to recrimination and hostility.

Since most crimes and misdemeanors are discovered in Lower Post, which is in British Columbia, justice is largely administered by provincial officials. Punishable offenses discovered by the police do not generally lead to an open statement of arrest nor is the individual given his liberty under bail, since to announce arrest leads to the danger that the offender will remove himself from the community. Within three or four days following the offense, word circulates through the town that the magistrate will hold court in the afternoon. The policeman then informs those Indians, who have been "under arrest," that their trial is due that day.

According to provincial law all offenses, other than major crimes, regardless of the plea of the defendant, may be tried by a civil magistrate without a jury. For some years cases have been tried by elderly white prospectors, but in 1945 the police constable from Fort Nelson several times flew to Lower Post to act as magistrate. All hearings are conducted in English. Court is held in the Hudson's Bay Company's bunkhouse which is normally reserved for white trappers. A few boxes serve as seats for visitors, while the arresting

1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12



837 cases the wife is informed of the husband's decision. According to Nitla: "She can't say no. I'm her boss." He added: "No matter if friends, and you give her kids. So long you not sick." However questionable such ideal control of the husband may be, the fact is that a wife will often be fully willing to act as a partner in such an arrangement, because she herself desires the husband's friend and finds any other means of gratifying her desire difficult. She may even add her insistence for such an exchange to her husband's, in the event that the other partner remains aloof from the proposal. A rare variant of this pattern is for an unmarried man to supply his married friend with an unmarried girl in exchange for sexual access to the latter's wife. Frequently extramarital sexual exchanges are arranged under condition of intoxication. Wife lending also occurs to oblige a man who is away from his wife.

548 Evidence of the direct sale of sexual favors was noted in only one young woman during the period when American troops and construction workers were crowding Lower Post. Although other promiscuous girls undoubtedly received money and gifts of cigarettes, candy, and lighters from soldiers, the motive behind their behavior does not appear to have been primarily pecuniary. Most girls were willing to exchange sexual access for truck rides and the stimulation of erotic situations. Local white trappers also make efforts to secure Indian girls as temporary sexual partners and in return generally give them money. Since no girl relies to any extent on such financial remuneration, a pattern of prostitution may be questioned and other motives inferred. Such motives include a desire for sexual interaction and a reluctance to offend persistent white men.

• 835 Incest is regarded with abhorrence and there is a tendency to classify as incestuous any sexual relationship between relatives (other than the paternal male and maternal female cross-cousins) closer than third cousins and between members of the same moiety. Not only would discovery of an incestuous relationship arouse strong public opinion, but such behavior is thought to lead to insanity in the guilty couple and deformity in the offspring.

839 The only forms of atypical sexual relations known to occur in Kaska society are rape and
[838] manifest homosexuality. Since premarital sexual intercourse is often carried out in a manner suggesting rape, particular attention was paid to the definition of this form of behavior. Informants agreed that pursuing a girl in order to win sexual access to her is not necessarily rape. They pointed out that rape can occur only when a girl unmistakably resents a man's attention and fights him for her freedom. One is still left unclear as to how much struggle is required to demarcate the typical from the atypical. Field notes contain several incidents in which from two to six youths were observed dragging girls into bushes or vacant houses. On one occasion June Barre, the youngest promiscuous girl in the community, requested the company of the ethnographer's wife en route to a dance. She was asked if she ran from boys in order to tease them or because she was afraid, and replied that she ran because she was frightened. Yet the ethnographer's wife once interrupted a situation in which three older youths were struggling with June. The boys ran off but the girl, instead of retaining her safety, quickly went into the night alone. Obviously the ambivalence which girls seem to manifest in sexual situations makes it difficult to recognize rape. The fact that girls traveling at night are often accompanied by partners helps somewhat in making a distinction. When such girls accede to sexual demands expressed through teasing and pursuit, they separate

2: Teit E-5 (1912-1915) 1917
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to camp, and their mother went back to look for them. She found that they had turned into beavers, and had already built a house. After this they were beavers. 539

### 14. THE MAN WHO COHABITED WITH HIS SISTER.[1]

A man lived in one place with his two wives, who were sisters. The elder had four children, and the younger none. In another place not far away lived his sister, who was married to a brother of his wives. The man always killed plenty of marmots, and the family were well provided for. After a time he brought home no marmots, and the family began to be hungry. He had become enamoured of his sister, who was a young girl, and he visited her constantly. He killed his sister's husband (brother to his wives), cut his body open, and defecated inside. He brought all the meat to his sister, and none to his family, for he wished them to starve to death. He claimed that he had bad luck and could get no game. Sometimes he was away as long as five nights, and returned without anything. The women managed to live by snaring ground-squirrels. They noticed that their husband was always fat and contented-looking, and he never slept with them. They became suspicious, and one day the elder wife followed him. When he was out of sight, she ran; and when in sight, she lay and watched. She took advantage of the nature of the ground, and followed him until she saw him enter his sister's camp. She hid and watched until she saw him leave the camp for the purpose of visiting his marmot-traps. He was dressed in new clothes, while, when he came home to them, he always wore old ragged clothes. When he was out of sight, she approached the camp, and, in passing by the place where they got water, she saw the defiled body of her brother lying there. She entered the camp, and saw much meat there. She said to her sister-in-law, "Oh, you are well off! Your husband must be a good hunter, for you have plenty of meat on hand. Our husband cannot get anything, and we are starving." Her sister-in-law then cooked some liver for her, although there was an abundance of good meat in the camp. After eating, she said to her sister-in-law, "I think you have many lice in your head. I will louse you before I go." The girl accepted the service, and laid her head in the woman's lap. After lousing her a little while, the woman took the two bone scratchers which were suspended by a string around the girl's neck, and with one in each hand ran them into the girl's ears and killed her. She pounded up some dried meat, and filled the girl's mouth and nostrils with it. Then, taking a pack of the best meat and fat, she went home, and fed her children with fat. When the man returned to his sister's camp, he found her dead, and was very sorry. He took his

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[1] Also known to the Tahltan.

2: Teit E-5 (1912-1915) 1917
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pack of marmots to his own camp, where he said to his wives, "I have had good luck this time, and have brought you some meat; but you must make a camp for me some distance away, as I want to be alone. If I sleep with you, my bad luck may return." His real reason was, that he might be alone, and thus be able to cry without being noticed. The women made a camp for him a little ways off, arranged everything nicely, and put a block of wood under his pillow. That evening they fed the children with some roots. One of them cried for fat; and the women, fearing their husband had heard it, said, "It is roots the child means. How could he know about fat? He has never been used to eating it."[1] Their husband went over to his camp, and they could hear him crying. After a while he fell asleep, and they could hear him snoring. The two women then went over and clubbed him to death on the head. Before he died he cried, "You have killed my sister, and now you kill me!" (*This is why men sometimes take a fancy to their sisters, and even cohabit with them.* Had not this man in mythological times become enamoured of his sister, men would not do so now.)

The elder sister now proposed that they should go to where their late husband's brother lived, and tell him what had happened. He was unmarried and lived alone. The younger sister was afraid, saying that he would kill them; but at last she agreed to go. They gathered all their meat together, and took all the marmots from the traps, and made a cache of all. Then they burned the body of their husband and departed. When they drew near their brother-in-law's camp, the elder sister said, "I am not afraid. I don't care if he kills me. I shall go and see him." She went into the camp, carrying her baby on her back, and told the man of the killing of his brother and sister, giving him full details. He said to her, "You have done right. My brother did evil, and acted like a dog." The woman told him that her sister was afraid, and remained some distance away with the children. He said, "Tell her to come in. She need not be afraid. I do not blame you for what you have done." She went into camp with the children, and the two sisters became the wives of their brother-in-law.

### 15. STORY OF THE WATER-MAN.[2]

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Some people who lived near a lake were troubled by a water-man who lived in the middle of the lake. He fooled and ate people. In the centre of the lake could be seen numerous very long strings, like weeds, on the surface of the water. This was his hair. On the edge of the lake was a thing growing, in substance like a stick, and in shape like a man's penis. This was his penis. The people had tried many

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[1] See Eskimo (Nelson, RBAE 18 : 465); Russell (JAFL 13 : 15); Jetté (JAI 38 : 341).
[2] Tsetsa'at (Boas, JAFL 10 : 48).

6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
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children, and when he realized this promise another reward accrued to the husband. Not only did marriage provide a dependable source of sexual gratification but a young man secured his reputation in the community when he no longer had to "bother" girls or other men's wives in order to obtain such satisfaction. On the other side, women welcomed marriage for its economic rewards, like an abundance of food and skins for clothing, as well as for sexual opportunities and the children that might follow.

Boys married around the age of 18; that is, when they were old enough to meet the primary qualification of a husband, namely, to be able to earn a living by hunting. Girls married when about 16 years old or shortly after menarche. An older brother ideally took a bride before his junior but an elder sibling's prerogatives were not so great that parents interfered with a younger brother's marriage plans. While great disparity between the ages of spouses sometimes occurred, it was never happily regarded. Public opinion maintained that because an old man could not make his living as easily as a younger man he could not expect to marry a young wife. The union of a mature woman and a young man received more tolerance but even then "much talk" might follow. Men incapable of making a living by hunting, or those who enjoyed the reputation for stinginess (they "try to hold on to meat and not share it; they hunt alone") sometimes never married. Also there were men who resembled the women previously described and showed little interest in women or sex. They too refrained from marrying.

Blood relatives as close as parallel cousins of the second and third generation came under the incest taboos as did members of the same matrilineal moiety. Marriage to a maternal cross cousin was preferred. Other unions were frequently concluded by sister exchange. Marriage outside of the tribe (macrocosmic group) was not too well regarded. People from abroad, it was felt, could rarely be trusted. Also intertribal marriage might lead to trouble in cases where the members of such a group learned about some mistreatment suffered by one of the outmarrying persons. Marriage to captive women certainly had a place, single men regarding the war party as an opportunity to secure a wife. If the defeated group happened to recognise moiety distinctions a warrior took only a woman of the opposite exogamous division. The initial treatment of captive wives was apt to be harsh but warmer relations usually followed the birth of children. Married men never secured additional spouses through war. Women objected strenuously to sharing a man with anyone but a closely related co-wife.[9] What appears to have been literal bride purchase obtained in unusual circumstances, as when a rich man negotiated for the daughter of a poor family. In return he paid clothing, other valuables, and presumably continued to supply food to his parents-in-law. Such a marriage was not highly esteemed.

Generally a period of bride service, lasting as long as two years, preceded marriage. During this interval a young man supplied meat, skins, and wood for the family of his intended bride, sometimes without directly announcing his intentions to the parents. His plans were probably well understood and he usually enjoyed sexual relations with the girl of his choice. Ideally the period of bride service allowed a youth to demonstrate

[9] But among the Sursi a captive woman was said to have made an excellent co-wife. Honigmann, *Changes in Sursi Social Culture* (manuscript).